

thoughts upon the Providence, that so graciously superintends "the little events of our little pilgrimages?" Have the divine dealings towards us had no special design? Have they not been directed to the correction, if not of palpable blemishes, at least of latent evils? And have we here been fellow-workers with God, or have we been untoward and perverse? Can the Christian review even a short year, and not feel how the facts of life confirm the gospel theory of life as a scene of trial, not only for faith and patience, but for every grace? The circumstances by which we are surrounded, in all their various, never-ending, and frequently painful combinations, are not fortuitous. In concurrence with the Spirit and the word, they are intended to teach us lessons of wisdom. And of how little consequence is it in what field, or under what sky, or at the cost of what earthly privations, these precious lessons are gleaned! To some the departed year may have been one of prosperity. Let not such forget "the days of darkness." To others, it may have been a year of "labour and sorrow." But will not such, if acquainted with the consolations of the gospel, be prepared to sing of that mercy whose predominance *they* will readily confess. "To the upright there ariseth light in darkness." Will not they be amongst the first to "mention the loving kindness of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed" upon them? Such may perhaps be entering the new year under the cloud which has overshadowed the past. Be this as it may, the eye that has hitherto been upon them for good will not now slumber. The resources of that wisdom and power and goodness, which have hitherto proved equal to their necessities, are unexhausted and inexhaustible. To neglect the affairs

of the humblest of his children, would be as inconsistent with the absolute perfection of God's holy Providence, as to neglect the affairs of the universe.

It may be that during the past year, some reader has been called into the fellowship of the gospel. It so, and if through rich grace that reader prove "faithful unto death," what a memorable year has it been to him; a year that must appear more and more memorable through all succeeding years, and through all succeeding ages, since our view of the magnitude of spiritual interests may naturally be expected to enlarge as time rolls on, and as, when time is no more, the import of that mysterious word Eternity becomes better and better understood. That the heart should have yielded so late and so reluctantly to claims so equitable and so solemnly enforced, is a consideration which may be expected to awaken shame and self-abhorrence; the more so when it is considered, that but for almighty goodness, it had continued "a flagrant rebel still." Are there no suitable solemnities with which to commence the first year of spiritual liberty, "no living sacrifice," no "reasonable service"?

But, perhaps, the reader has been for many years enrolled amongst the followers of Jesus Christ. May it not be useful to inquire what has been the spiritual character of the past year, as compared with former ones? We have indeed no contrivances, parallel to those of science, by which we might ascertain on the one hand the highest point which "faith, hope, and charity" have been favoured to reach; or, on the other, the lowest (and, alas! how low may we not fear that with the most of us it would prove) to which we have suffered them to descend. And in these calculations, on both sides, are we liable to self-deception. But